

REMARKS

35 USC §103

Owens In View of Putney

Claims 1-10 are herein rejected under 35 USC §103 as being obvious over Owens et al. (US 5878501) in view of Putney (US 705441).

Those rejections are obviated by the amendments herein. None of the cited art teaches, suggests, or motivates one of ordinary skill in the art to provide a knife having a mechanism that is responsive to use of the blade for cutting, and that automatically re-locks the protective covering to prevent more than a single use of the blade until the trigger is once again operated. The trigger in Owens et al. positions the blade outside the handle so that the blade can be used for cutting, and then manually pulls the blade back into the handle so that the blade is protected. This is inconsistent with the subject matter being claimed. First, Owens et al's trigger mechanism leaves the blade in the "use" position for many uses. Second, Owens et al. has no automatic re-locking mechanism. Withdrawal of the blade into the handle is entirely manual.

Putney does indeed disclose dispatching the blade cover without continued action by a user. But Putney still does not add the missing elements from the current claims.

Matin et al.

Matin et al., US 4980977, describes a knife having a safety guard that covers the blade when not in use, and automatically retracts as the blade is removed from the workpiece. The guard has a manually triggered self-locking release assembly that automatically relocks the guard when retracted.

Significantly, Matin's locking mechanism is external to the handle housing, which is dangerous because the mechanism is readily subjected to debris that could jam or otherwise interfere with both the locking and unlocking functions. The present claims all require that the self-locking release assembly is internal to the handle.

In addition, Matin's safety cover pivots off the blade externally to the handle housing, rather than being retracted into the handle. That operation is dangerous because the pivoted

Serial No.: 09/804,451
Rutan Docket No. 019502.0014US1

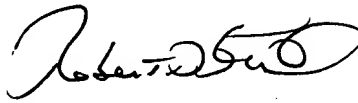
guard can readily interfere with operation of the knife. Claims 2-5 all require that the cover retracts into the handle.

REQUEST FOR ALLOWANCE

Claims 1-5 are pending in this application. The applicants request allowance of all pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: November 3, 2003

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